COPROLITE

No. 40 March 2003

DROPPINGS FROM THE GEOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP

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Chairman's Report

The first year of my three-year term has passed, and I feel somewhat dazed. Shortly after last year's AGM I was bombarded with e-mails from Cardiff - do this, this has to be completed, ignore the other. As I mentioned at the Committee meeting held in January the life of the Chairman seems to be one of deflection, absorption, and response. I now have a folder for my incoming e-mail entitled "Chairman's business" and it contains 208 messages - one per working day of last year.

The Committee continues to worry about and act upon Orphan Collections and collections-at-risk. This year I have made representations on behalf of the collections held at Northampton, Gloucester, Musée de l'Homme in Paris, the Nottingham collections now in Durham, and Oxford Brookes. In some cases the situation is still ongoing, and I will continue to monitor the situation, in other cases the threat has receded. Northampton have now decided to retain their collections, while at Durham it appears that no valuable specimens were sold to Open University students. This collection is being accessed, and some of it is due to be given to Manchester. However in the light of what I say next is this a good thing?

The Group made strong representations to the authorities at Manchester University to protest at the proposed implementation of a new management and staffing structure at the Manchester Museum. The level of Keeper was to be abolished and replaced with a lower level of collections manager, and the Committee felt that this would not be in the long-term interests of the collections. The proposed changes will apparently now go ahead, and at the moment I do not know how the collections, or indeed the geology staff will be affected by this move. We cannot take anything for granted - if the important collections at a designated University museum can be compromised what hope is there for other more vulnerable collections?

The Group is preparing a working discussion document on the whole issue of ethics and geological collecting and acquisition. A Working Group was set up, but shortly afterwards its Chairman stood down due; it proved impossible to get a suitable replacement. That said the working party consisting of Susan Cooke, Tom Sharpe and myself have nearly completed the document, and this will be distributed in the New Year to others for comment. I hope that a short statement of the Group's position on this issue can be published shortly in The Geological Curator and in Coprolite. I know that the Museums Association is also interested in our conclusions.

Recently I have had contact with the folks at FENSCORE and they are keen to get that initiative revitalised. This is something the GCG could get involved in, and so keep an eye on Coprolite for any details. We are keeping a close eye on the planned joining together of the BCG and NSCG, and have a close link through Steve Thompson who is keeping the GCG committee appraised of the current situation.

It has been a transitional year where the new committee and officers has eased itself into new roles. We have a new Secretary and Treasurer and Chairman, but already the influence of the former is beginning to be seen. The Committee has worked very hard on your behalf, and I believe have set the Group up for expansion in the future. Membership has declined somewhat, and it has become increasingly difficult to get members to pay subscriptions. I suspect that this is due to forgetfulness rather than dissatisfaction with the Group and its workings. However it would be good to know what members want from GCG. A concerted effort will be made in 2003 to bring back those disenfranchised members as well as to find new members. The Group should be able to reach a membership of at least 500 persons and institutions. All of us present here today should be paid-up members but how many of our institutions are paid-up members?

Giles Miller has taken up the reins of Secretary with gusto and efficiency; Susan Cooke has done a great deal of work looking at the ethics issue, as well as trying to improve our finances through various schemes. Steve McLean continues to organise a lively and topical slate of events, and with the indispensable help of Ros Gourgey organised a quick switch to Berlin when problems arose with Prague the original location for the annual study visit. As far as I know 8 members enjoyed the trip to Germany. Steve organises meetings that the committee think members would wish

to participate in, he would be grateful for suggestions as to what we want. Tom Sharpe edits *Coprolite* which continues to grow fulfilling its original purpose. I am delighted to have Tom on the Committee as he has a wealth of knowledge of British geological museums and a great number of personal contacts which are of great use to the Committee. As a non-UK national I have to admit having difficulties at times understanding the acronyms that fly around the Committee table - it is useful to have somebody there you can put me right. Tony Morgan is the Minutes Secretary and without him the Committee probably would not do any work. Glenys Wass has been the Recorder for a number of years and instituted a new Status survey. Unfortunately she is stepping down this year, but the compilation of the returns and analysis of the results will be undertaken by the new Recorder. I thank Glenys for her considerable contribution to the GCG as Recorder. The Committee has been fortunate to have had as members Helen Fothergill, Camilla Nichol (who is our Web Master), Sara Chambers, Mark Evans, John Nudds, Steve Thompson and RosGourgey who have brought a range of abilities and experiences to the Committee table. I am most grateful to all the members of the committee who have made this year an enjoyable one for the GCG.

Finally the GCG is saddened to have lost two major figures in John Norton and Bill Sarjeant. John worked at Ludlow for many years, while Bill had a wide range of interests both in palynology and the history of geology. They will be missed. To their families and those of all recently deceased GCG members I extend the warmest sympathy on behalf of the Group.
Patrick N Wyse Jackson

Have you signed up yet?

Subscriptions were due on 1 January 2003. Subscriptions are £12.00 for UK Personal Members and £15.00/€23.00/US$23.00 for Overseas Personal Members. A subscription renewal form was included in the last issue of *Coprolite*, along with Standing Order and Gift Aid forms. If you are a UK member, please take advantage of this opportunity to pay by standing order, and to sign up for Gift Aid. As a charity, GCG can recover tax from the Inland Revenue at a rate of 28p for each £1 of your subscription. It costs you nothing and helps GCG to keep subscriptions down. You can't afford not to do it! Check out the forms at the back of the November issue of *Coprolite*, fill them in and send them to Giles Miller, GCG Secretary. If you don't have the forms, email Giles at G.Miller@nhm.ac.uk and he'll send them to you. If you haven't paid your subs by the end of April, then this is the last issue of *Coprolite* you will receive.

New members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Oliver Hampe**, Museum fur Naturkunde, Berlin; **Barbara Hamann**, Conservator, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh; **Gaynor Boon**, Assistant Curator Earth Sciences, Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust; **John A. Gibson**, Director, Scottish Natural History Library, Kilbarchan,Renfrewshire; *and* **Jeremy Young**, *Head of Micropalaeontology,* The Natural History Museum.

GCG Committee 2003

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Professor Frank Hodson

We are sorry to report the death of Frank Hodson, formerly Professor of Geology at the University of Southampton and a long-standing member of GCG.

Newish publications

Annals of Bryozoology: aspects of the history of research on bryozoans edited by PN Wyse Jackson, & ME Spencer Jones, 2002. Dublin: International Bryozoology Association, viii + 381pp. ISBN 0 9543644 0 6, £20.00/€25.00/$25.00.

Ammonites by Neale Monks & Philip Palmer, 2002. London: Natural History Museum, 160pp. ISBN 0 565 09169 7, £15.95.

Die palaontologischen Sammlungen in Deutschland – Inhalte, Erfassung und Gefahrdung by Ulrich Jansen & Fritz F Steininger, 2002. Stuttgart: E Schweizerbart'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 101pp. ISBN 3 510 61337 6.

Quaternary of Northern England by D Huddart and N F Glasser, 2002. Geological Conservation Review Series 25. Peterbrough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee, xvi + 745pp.ISBN 1 86107 490 5.

British Middle Jurassic stratigraphy by BM Cox and MG Sumbler, 2002. Geological Conservation Review Series 26. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee, xvi + 508pp.ISBN 1 86107 479 4.

The dinosaur dealers by John Long, 2002. Allen and Unwin, ISBN 1 86508 829 3

Mesozoic birds. Above the heads of dinosaurs edited by Luis M Chiappe and Lawrence M Witmer, 2002. Berkeley: University of California Press, xii + 520pp. ISBN 0 520 20094 2.

Atlas of plants and animals in Baltic amber by Wolfgang Weitschat and Wilfried Wichard, 2002. Munich: Verlag Dr Friedrich Pfeil, 256pp. ISBN 3 931 51694 6.

Minerals of Scotland by Alec Livingstone, 2003. Edinburgh: NMS Publishing, 216pp. ISBN 1 901663 46 9, £35.00

Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2003

8-9 March Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex

29-30 March Brighton Racecourse, Freshfield Road, Brighton

12-13 April Cheltenham Racecourse, Prestbury Park, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

17-18 May Newark Showground, Winthorpe, Newark, Nottinghamshire

Contact: The Exhibition Team, PO Box 72, Maidenhead SL6 7GB tel 01628 621697, fax 01628 680702, email info@rockngem.co.uk, www.Rockngem.co.uk

Keepers to be axed at Manchester

Proposals put forward by the management of The Manchester Museum will see the loss of all nine current Keeper posts if they are given the go-ahead by Manchester University Council at its meeting in early April. This is the result of a report by a firm of management consultants contracted to undertake a Human Resources Review. Their brief was to find ways of improving research outputs and collections management and to make management more effective.

The collections management role of the current keepers will be taken over by Specialist Curators and the research function by Museum-Academic Joint

Appointments shared between the Museum and the relevant academic department. Three new senior management posts (Head of Operations, Head of Public Programmes and Head of Collections) will be created, to which all other staff will report.

Current keepers will either be considered for reappointment at a lower grade as Specialist Curators, may be moved sideways into a University teaching department, or will have to accept voluntary redundancy. One keeper who has worked in that capacity at the Museum for 30 years has apparently been told that he would not be qualified for the new post of Curator, which requires a first degree, a post-graduate qualification in museum studies, membership of the Museums Association, and, preferably, a doctorate. So far only one Keeper has been accepted by an existing University teaching department. Keepers have drafted an alternative proposal, but this is not being considered.

The Director of the Manchester Museum, Tristram Besterman, argues that the keepers have been expected to fulfil too many functions, serving the public, the university and the collections. He also points out that the restructuring will increase the number of museum staff in research and collections management by 9, and in management, education and visitor services by 13, with no long term increase in the salaries budget.

Dudley Rock and fossil Festival: a truly earth-shattering event!

Only five hours after the last of the experts and exhibitors had left Dudley Town Hall and Museum on the night of Sunday 22 September 2002, one of the UK's largest earthquakes for many years shook the Midlands. With uncanny timing, the Dudley Earthquake rocked the country as if intended to be a fitting closing event to the largest rock show that the Midlands has ever seen. Both events drew local, regional, national and international interest to Dudley and have resulted in much renewed interest in the exceptional geological heritage that we have around here.

After an absence from the national geological calendar of major events of five years, the Dudley Rock and Fossil festival and fair (one of the UK's largest celebrations of popular natural sciences) returned to Dudley museum and town hall complex with much excitement and anticipation. This was the largest family event of its kind in the UK in recent years and attracted all kinds of people from all ages and backgrounds.

This year the festival was themed around 'Geoart' (art inspired by the beauty and mystery of minerals, rocks and fossils) and the engineering that is done in this outstanding area of earth science to protect and enhance the sites that we have for all future generations to enjoy and study. This years festival included 43 exhibitors and special displays ranging from dinosaurs and cave art through to engineering and crystal healing-a truly varied geological feast. A family activity room offered the chance to race Dudley Bugs, make fossils and come face to face with a *Velociraptor*! Special events included tours of the town centre's geological highlights, trips over and under Dudley and showings of the Disney film *Dinosaur* . Scattered around the

venues were experts across the spectrum of Earth sciences who were on hand to identify specimens, give all kinds of advice from panning for gold to repairing a prized specimen that had got damaged and fossil competitions and face painting catered for younger tastes.

The weekend was graced by fine weather and the event is a tribute to the huge community support from the Black Country Geological Society who sponsored the event and supplied more than 40 voluntary staff to steward the event. Huge thanks are also due to friends of the museum and works experience students both current and from previous years who manned activities and maintain their interest in and continue to support the museums heritage work and educational programmes.

The event has done a great deal to raise the profile of the borough and its exceptional geological heritage and put us very firmly back on the map with network of new contacts and supporters across the UK. The museum has seen quite a considerable increase in enquiries and demands on the geological services as a result, and also has received a number requests for schools works experience placements for geology and palaeontology (as the only place in the West Midlands and a considerable distance beyond offering a full scale public service for geological heritage).

The festival and fair was a fantastic public event and a great success. Its return had been long-awaited in the geological community and new technology and better practices and services in the authority allowed it to be bigger and better than anything previously attempted for geology by the museums service. Its success and the wonderful feedback received from visitors are a tribute to all of the staff and the volunteers whose enthusiasm and talents made it possible.
Graham Worton, Dudley Museum

The merger of BCG and NSCG: update

With the crucial factors dealt with and the broad outlines drawn up, the last couple of merger meetings have been concerned with the details of the merger process, concluding the business with the Charities Commission and planning the set of AGMs for the groups. The Charities Commission has now confirmed that they have registered the new group, assuming that certain changes were made to the objects. This has come about because of the Commission's overriding focus on the public benefit aspects. Additionally, they view any mention of conservation as being related to the environment, no doubt because of the number of charities with this as their remit. The objects now read:

To advance the education of the public in the care and use of natural science collections. To promote for the benefit of the public the highest standards in the preparation, care, conservation, management, interpretation and research of natural science collections and conservation and specimens. To promote, for the public benefit, the science of natural science collections conservation and curation.

It was felt that while these might not be exactly what we had intended, they

contained what we felt our objects to be, and agreed that we would accept these changes.

A bank account is being set up, using an equal amount from the two groups, in order to cover the establishment costs and set up the AGMs. The AGM forms a major part of the discussion, as that is where everything will be put into practice. Also, as the new group will be taking forward the business currently being undertaken by the individual groups, some discussion of future events and activities was necessary. Much of this will, of course, have to be approved by the new committee once it has been established. It was agreed that the committee elected at the Inaugural General Meeting (IGM) would be an interim committee, with full elections taking place at the AGM in 2004. A list of candidates will be proposed by the merger committee for the new committee, and voted on block, unless there are enough nominations from the membership to require a formal election. The two groups are likely to forego the publication of their next newsletters and transfer the material into an early publication of the first issue of the newsletter for the new group. This might be expected to appear in May or early June. The process continues to run smoothly, so watch this space.
Steve Thompson, BCG Representative

GCG Study Visit
Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin
28 November-1 December 2002

Airport and arrival

Four of us out of a group of eight were to meet up at Stansted Airport. I had never met any of the group before so had no idea what they looked like. With the aid of a mobile phone I make contact, only to discover that I had found the group standing next to me! After a short flight we safely arrive in Berlin, jump into a taxi and proceed to our hotel (taxi driver attempts to drop us at a hotel, which is not the one we want, but after travelling for a while and a sharp u-turn we arrive at the correct hotel). After meeting with a couple more of the group, we find a local pub/bar/restaurant and enjoy an evening of traditional German/Austrian food and drink.

Friday 29 November
Lecture room

Dr Oliver Hampe, Curator for vertebrates and who was our tour guide for the duration of our stay, greeted us at 8.45am. The visit began with a welcome from the Director of Palaeontology, Prof Dr Hans-Peter Schultze. Oliver Hampe then gave us a talk about the history, layout and staff structure of the museum. He pointed out that they are seriously underfunded by the state. The lack of money has meant that they are unable to update their exhibition halls or to rebuild part of the museum that had been destroyed during the War. A great shame as there appears to be plenty of money being spent on other building work around Berlin.

Palaeo walkabout

We were escorted to a very cold warehouse room, home to the Carboniferous Palaeobotanical collection containing about 90,000 specimens. The head curator of Palaeobotany, Dr Stephan Schultka explained that the warehouse roof, depending on the direction of the wind, would leak rain into the collection room and so for many years buckets were an integral part of the collection furniture. Another hazard of this particular room was that during summer months the roof would rain down melted tar! However, the good news is that an outer skin has now been applied to the roof, which has stopped the rain coming in (just), not sure about the tar! The second Palaeobotany collection room had recently been renovated. Unfortunately the renovators forgot to put in lighting but the museum had managed to fit a couple of spotlights. Through the long, shadow-casting light, we were shown a very rare, black, Permian petrified fern stem slice, from a river in Manebach, Rotliegendes. The third collection room contained drawers full of early angiosperm and seed specimens in limestone (even a fossilized golden snitch, for Harry Potter fans!)

Visiting invertebrates

Next stop was the Invertebrate collection shown to us by the Head Curator, Martin Aberhan. The collection room was conveniently placed over looking the dinosaur gallery, so after many shots of the gigantic *Brachiosaurus* we proceeded to wander through the invertebrate storage cases. There are about 700,000 specimens in the collection and we were shown case upon case of ammonites, gastropods, sponges and crinoids. We proceeded next to the Preparation Lab where there is a fairly good range of conservation equipment including an airbrasive machine and a modern looking acid lab. Conservators were busy revealing fossil specimens by grinding away surface rock. We were told that this could take months just to complete one fossil (a laborious task; I take my hat off to them!)

Student sized lunch and back to the lecture room

After a substantial lunch in the student canteen we rolled back to the lecture room for a dose of databasing. Dr Wolfgang Kiessling, a research associate of the museum, talked us through the latest database developments of the museum. The Museum für Naturekunde is jointly involved in the production of a scientific Paleobiology database for world collections. The functions available on the database are very impressive. It allows a search of collections, the creation of maps, production of data tables as well as other exciting features (note under the list of participants nobody contributing from the UK!). Check it out at www.paleodatabase.org

Birthday Party!

Late afternoon we were very kindly invited to partake in the 65th Birthday and retirement celebration of Hans-Peter Schultze. The party was held in the glorious museum cellar, a fantastically decorated room overflowing with chocolates, sekt (German champagne) and lashings of food. It was great to see members of the department getting on so well and they all looked genuinely disappointed that their Director was retiring!

Après party, Weihnachts markt!
Being the beginning of the festive season in Germany meant that it was essential that the GCG group visited a German Christmas Market. We sampled several German Christmas beverages, very warming...

Saturday 30 November
Mineralogy
Our tour of the mineralogy collection was led by Ferdinand Damaschun, leader of the Department of Exhibitions. The mineralogy collection contains about 230,000 specimens representing 75% of all known minerals. The Mineral Hall is still in its original 19th century state, apart from the spotlights and one new display case, and houses a vast collection of fine and historic specimens. Amongst the collection are many ore minerals from the local ore mining regions. Included are a large and rare pyromorphite and a well preserved specimen containing bournonite, siderite and galena. There is a large collection of radioactive specimens, many obtained from the local region, including the original specimen in which Martin Heinrich Klaproth (German chemist) discovered the element uranium.

Marvellous meteorites
There was a very brief visit to the meteorite storage area. However, my disappointment of lack of time was soon rectified when I saw the meteorite collection on display in the Mineral gallery. The display contains a collection of Martian meteorites including a large piece of Zagami and a big chunk of Nakhla, both lovely specimens. There is also a vast collection of Saharan material on display and, most importantly, they have the meteorite collection of Ernst Florens Chladni, the founder of the scientific study of meteorites. Fantastic and well worth a visit!

Dinosaur Hall
Diplodocus, *Plateosaurus* and *Dicraeosaurus* are just some of the dinosaurs on show in the Hall. However, there is but one dinosaur on display that towers over all, the Brachiosaurus. This one is known to be the tallest mounted dinosaur in the world. Many of the dinosaur skeletal remains have come from the site in Tendaguru, East Africa. The shales of Württemberg have provided extremely well preserved ichthyosaur and pterosaur specimens that adorn the walls of the dinosaur hall.

Vertebrate tour or *Archaeopteryx* tour?
Dr David Unwin and Dr Oliver Hampe unveil *Archaeopteryx*! Seven out of eight of our group are what could be called obsessive *Archaeopteryx* hunters; I was the odd one out. Although I do not know a great deal about the *Archaeopteryx* I can say that I was truly impressed with the condition and detail of this beautiful fossil bird. I felt privileged to have seen the genuine item in the 'flesh' so to speak. After an hour of photography we moved onto a tour of the Bone cellar. Most of the specimens stored here were obtained from the Tendaguru site.

And finally.....

Dr Oliver Hampe finished off the afternoon talking to us about his current research projects involving early sharks *Xenacanthus* and *Diplodoselache*. That evening Oliver booked us into a local Swedish restaurant called Sieke's Weinhaus where we enjoyed a traditional Swedish Xmas Buffet. Ros Gourgey and Steve McLean did a great job in organizing this extremely enjoyable trip, so a big thanks to them. Also thanks must go to all at the Museum für Naturekunde who took the time to talk to us and show us their wonderful collections.
Babs Potter, Department of Mineralogy, Natural History Museum

A few days in Berlin - being a mostly true and almost accurate account of the GCG 2002 Official Visit to one of the great natural history museums of the world.

For some years GCG has made an annual excursion to great natural history museums of the World. Brussels (a day trip!), Paris, the museums of Holland, Bavaria, New York, and in 2002 the Museum für Naturkunde, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin.

THE JOURNEY - on Thursday November 28, eight of us set out for Berlin from various parts of the UK and by various routes. Starts were from Belfast, Newcastle, Cardiff, Manchester, London, Essex and Lymington. Final departure points were - Stansted, London City and Heathrow. All three of the Berlin airports saw one or more arrival.

MY STORY - travelling alone, train to Woking, coach to Heathrow; arrived in plenty of time, made even more so by the announcement in the Departure Lounge: "We are so sorry, but your pilot has reported sick and the flight will be delayed for an *hour and a half while we get another pilot in*". *Arrived* Berlin, Tegel, appropriately late. Taxi - apparently Berlin taxi-drivers don't have to know where things are in the city, they just drive to the passengers' instructions. 'The Garden Hotel, 122 Invalidienstrasse' was much too complicated for mine. He dropped me off in the general area - fortunately I walked in the right direction, the buildings were poorly *numbered with largish gaps between them - the reason will become apparent.* Checked in and contacted the rest of the group by mobile phone (worth its weight in gold in these circumstances). John Nudds arrived from Manchester a few minutes after me. All met up, most had eaten, but we all went a few streets away to the bar of the main Hotel Honigmond (to which the Garden Hotel is a 'satellite'), where *John and I ate - and the others 'forced down a little something'.* We then went for an early'ish night.

The hotel (and the Museum) are both in East Berlin (as was); hence unreplaced bomb damage and missing street numbers. Called "The Garden Hotel" because the courtyard and garden at the rear had a row of 'chalets' where four of us stayed (a bit like posh stables or loose boxes) - comfortable, but little heed had been taken of the possibilities for condensation and the roof-light dripped onto the bed. Not a lot, just enough to look embarrassing - my fault for breathing. By the way, Germans DO have a sense of humour, in one flowerbed there was a marble head trying to get out - OK, it was a partially buried bust, but it made me smile.

Early start on Friday for the Museum, received at 0845 by our guide for two days, Dr Oliver Hampe - delightful, a good English-speaker, with a refreshingly cynical view of restructuring and re-organising the Museum's hierarchy. Welcomed by Hans-Peter Schultze, Director (of whom, more anon). Talk on the history of the Museum - sad situation that, because it was in East Germany/East Berlin for so long, the bombed (1944) East Wing is still a ruin (there are substantial trees growing out of it); there is no immediate prospect of a rebuild - and this is one of Germany's greatest museums. Tour of Palaeobotanical Collections; some very interesting stuff from the Santana/Crato Formations of Brazil, but a strange thing; when the Palaeobotanical stuff was re-housed, the top floor extension was not provided with artificial light and the staff had to cobble it together themselves! Visit to Preparation Lab., in the basement - plenty of up and down stairs in this museum, I don't think we saw any lifts. Lunch, in what appeared to be a University cafeteria. Talk on Databases - a great deal more interesting than it sounded. Then, at 3pm we were invited to the Director, Hans-Peter Schultze's 65th birthday/retirement party - although he is not actually retiring yet, just due to. His reaction to being asked to stay on for a while was to the effect that he would, but he still wanted a party when he was due to go and another when he actually went - sounds like the right sort of chap to me. Large numbers of the Museum staff, families, friends and supporters were there, but there was probably twice as much food and drink available as was actually needed. The GCG acquitted itself well; several foraging trips left a considerable collection of empty champagne bottles on our tables. Most of the senior Palaeontological Department staff spent time with us, we were made most welcome and had a splendid time.

The night was young so we set off by U-Bahn and S-Bahn to the Zoologischer Garten station and the Christmas Market surrounding the ruined church Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche - the one preserved as a war memorial. Wonderful market and I think we nearly all bought some decorations for our Christmas trees. It was a cold, damp evening but quantities of gluwein and honigwein kept us going. The most destructive drink seemed to be jagertee ('hunters' tea'), about equal measures of black tea and rocket fuel. I don't have a clear memory of our return to the hotel, but I think a bar and weissbeer came into it somewhere, that and a long walk up Friedrichstrasse to Invalidienstrasse.

Saturday - back to the Museum - tour of Mineralogy Collection - then we started on the Palaeontology - more after lunch, which was taken in a nearby cafe. So, what did we see? - what awesome things nearly reduced me to silence? Two of the most important fossils in the World, that's what. Towering over everything, *Brachiosaurus brancai*, the largest mounted dinosaur skeleton in the World. From Tendagaru, German East Africa (Tanzania) between 1909 and 1913. 23m long, 12m tall, estimated live weight 70 tonnes. The Museum also has one of Andrew Carnegie's presentation casts of *Diplodocus carnegii*, just like the one in London, but it looks quite compact alongside the brachiosaur. And the other fossil? *Archaeopteryx lithographica* - the famous 'Berlin' specimen from the Solnhofen Limestone of Bavaria. The best preserved, most complete of the seven specimens known to Science, and surely the most valuable fossil in the World. The specimen

was put before us by an old acquaintance and GCG member, Dave Unwin, formerly at the Department of Geology, Bristol University and now Keeper of Fossil Reptiles and Birds in Berlin. The skeleton normally stays in its safe, so it was a great privilege to have a real closeup. Instead of train-spotting the GCG do *Archaeopteryx*-spotting; so far we have seen the specimens in London, Haarlem, Eichstätt, Munich and Berlin. That leaves Solnhofen itself and Maxberg. Some talk of having a T-shirt "I have seen *Archaeopteryx* in ..... " with a series of boxes to tick. We wound up at the Museum with a tour of the 'Bone Cellar', the reserve collection of vertebrate fossils, which included a number of crates of 'Tendaguru' material, still uncurated from 1913. A final discussion with Oliver Hampe, and the formal visit was over.

Sunday morning - this was our 'touristy' day. By U-Bahn and a walk up Unter den Linden to the Brandenburger Tor (Gate) - queued to enter the Reichstag, lift to the roof, ascended the Norman Foster reconstruction of the dome - you've seen photos of the spiral walkway. Lunch in a cafe on Wilhelmstrasse and then a walk down W-st. towards Checkpoint Charlie. On the way we came across a preserved section of the Berlin Wall, fronting an open-air exhibition about the Holocaust and the Wall - it pulled no punches, being brutally frank about Nazism. Something had been nagging my mind about 'Wilhelmstrasse'; it did not click until later, but that was where many of the Third Reich government's buildings were. You may even remember cheesy war films where one German says to another "the Wilhelmstrasse won't be pleased". Much worse, I later realised the full significance of the open-air exhibition - it was in the unroofed cells and cellars of the former Gestapo Headquarters, the cells now preserved as a dreadful memorial but the building bulldozed into a grass-covered mound. It used to be in Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, which is now Niederkirchnerstrasse after Käthe Niederkirchner, murdered in Ravensbrück Concentration Camp in 1944. A few days after I got back the exhibition was used as a background for a TV interview concerning the German Ambassador's criticism about the way German history is taught in UK schools. What goes around comes around? See it for the first time in Berlin, and then it pops up on BBC TV!

Checkpoint Charlie was what you would expect - a tourist money-trap, but interesting nonetheless. On to the Pergamon Museum, Berlin's equivalent of the British Museum. Little antiquities, like the Hellenistic Pergamon Altar - with about 30 steps leading up to its colonnade and the only major museum exhibit that I can think of which has smaller exhibits mounted on it, and can, and does seat dozens of people with aching feet. The Market Gate from Miletus is BIG too - and the reconstruction of the Processional Way and Ishtar Gate from Babylon; well, if you go to Berlin don't miss the Pergamon Museum. Later wanderings led us to another bar, this time in the historic Gendarmenmarkt, with the paired cathedrals.

Monday morning was the journey back to reality, I had to go early, others had afternoon flights - although Babs and Steve Mac had already gone. Now that I knew my way around, I took the U-Bahn out to the airport bus (all on the one ticket) and flew back to Heathrow. Woking coach arrived just as a train left - and then the 'fun' began. There had been a landslip in the Christchurch area and the Wessex Electric

trains were all snarled up; timetables were being redesigned 'on the fly'. After waiting an hour and a half, my fast 4-stopper to Brockenhurst transformed into an all-stations crawler - stations I had heard about but never stopped at before. It took more than twice as long to get from Woking to Brockenhurst as it did to travel Berlin to Heathrow. BUT - it was a really splendid trip, not spoiled by any of the slight glitches.
Paul Clasby

GCG seminar: A new look at geological displays
Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge
10 December 2002

Dr David Norman, Director of the Sedgwick Museum, welcomed us to the day's seminar. He briefly outlined the history of the museum, and how it had originated as an academic institution before becoming public in 1904. Since the introduction of public access there has been a certain degree of friction between the two different roles of the museum and this has to some extent influenced the way that the collections have been conserved, curated and displayed.

A little gem!! New Geology displays in Tyne and Wear Museums

The first presentation by Steve McLean of Tyne and Wear Museums dealt with recent redevelopments of the Earth science galleries of the Hancock and Sunderland museums. The assembly of the collections was begun by the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, amongst the earliest provincial scientific societies in the UK. The collections include the important Carboniferous vertebrate fossils collected by Thomas Atthey and Albany Hancock. He explained how the museum service is run and funded by the five districts of Tyne and Wear and managed by Newcastle University. The natural science collections are made up of approximately 700-800,000 objects with 120,000 geology specimens at the Hancock and 30,000 at Sunderland. We were shown images of the old 1970's Earth science displays and were told that these contained lots of hard to digest text that tended to 'turn-off' the audience which consists primarily of families and university students, while steps made access difficult for some visitors.

The Hancock Museum obtained an ERDF grant of £100,000 to redevelop the Earth science gallery. The new gallery, 'Earthworks', explores the cosmic and geological forces that have shaped the history of life from the Big Bang to the present day. It has been kept specimen rich with approximately the same number of specimens as before but has been made more accessible. The gallery has been aimed at National Curriculum Key Stages 2 and 3. In addition to more formal displays, pull-out drawers of rocks and fossils have been added with the contents being set in Plastazote inserts and protected with glass Click frame tops. The gallery covers fossils ranging in age from the Precambrian to Recent and is supplemented with lots of open display specimens that were bought in from local dealers. A video microscope with a rotating stage has been installed for viewing a selection of microfossils. Computer terminals can be used to access information on rock processes and there is a section that concentrates on the use of geological materials in industrial processes.

Sunderland's Earth science gallery 'Lost Worlds' was installed in 1991 but a decade on needed revamping. The strength of the collection lies in rocks and fossils ranging in age from the Carboniferous to the Permian and reflects the local geology. It was therefore decided that the new gallery should concentrate on these periods. An interesting point about the use of Braille labels was made; although these had been included in the original display, blind people found them difficult to find. The gallery was very small with an available area of perhaps 100m^2. Redman Design Associates were contracted to assist with the design of the new displays which cost around £150,000. The new display consists of dioramas supplemented with specimens set in Plastazote in pull-out drawers. The collections are very strong on Permian fish and so a fish section has been included that has a glass walled island with suspended fish models. Since palaeoniscid fish fossils are very common, some of these were included on open display for touching. Some nice touches included a *sliding magnifier to look at a variety of invertebrate fossils, a magnifier to look at* sand grains in a specimen of sandstone, and an accompanying 'feely' specimen of sandstone. Another nice touch is the partial skeleton of the Permian reptile *Proterosaurus* where an illuminated drawing of the complete skeleton appears around the fragment when a button is pushed.

As a further development it is planned to change the upper gallery into a local geology discovery centre with computer based information. A DCMS/Wolfson grant of £65,000 and HLF grant of £50,000 has been obtained for this project.

The Johnson Geocentre, Newfoundland & Labrador

Tom Sharpe from the National Museum of Wales spoke about the Johnson Geocentre, a new interpretation centre in St Johns, Newfoundland that opened in June 2002. Tom spoke about the geographical and cultural background of the area as well as the history of the Johnson Family Foundation and Paul Johnson its founder. The Johnson Family funds heritage projects throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. For the Johnson Geocentre, the Foundation contributed over half of the $11 million investment, with other contributions coming from the Provincial Government, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Human Resources Development Corporation, and the Canada Millennium Partnership Program. The Johnson Geocentre is a registered, not-for-profit organization. The aim of the Geocentre is to promote awareness of the Province's geology and the role it played in the development of our understanding of plate tectonics.

A site in St John's was chosen adjacent to an existing historical monument, Signal Hill, that receives approximately 700,000 visitors a year, mostly locals. It was decided to construct most of the building underground, so after the removal of the overlying till and peat from a glacially-scoured hollow, approximately 2900m^2 of bedrock was blasted out.

Being a totally new centre poses a few unique problems, such as the total absence of any pre-existing geological collections on which exhibits can be based. This was overcome with help from the Provincial Geological Survey, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and local prospectors, as well as field collecting. Meetings were set

up with many local stakeholders including the representatives of the mining, oil and gas and educational communities. Initially the local museum staff were understandably wary of the new centre, as it could be seen as competition for the museum which itself was about to undergo a major redevelopment at the time.

The exhibits start with a multimedia presentation that takes the visitor back through the story of the Earth. The rest of the exhibition area is divided into four sections — *Our Planet, Our Province, Our People,* and *Our Future.* These exhibits feature displays that allow visitors to walk through re-creations of a glacier or natural rock formation, while learning about the forces that shaped the planet, climate change etc. The natural rock exposed during excavation of the centre form the major walls to the exhibition area, and are an important feature of the exhibition themselves. When wet the structure of this 500 million year old rock can be examined by the visitor, so that the features and characteristics of Signal Hill's geology can be seen.

Dinosaur Isle: Interpreting geology in the age of Walking with Dinosaurs

Martin Munt gave a summary of the origins of Dinosaur Isle. This new museum on the Isle of Wight is based on the collections of the old Museum of Isle of Wight Geology that inhabited a few dingy rooms above Sandown Public Library. The new museum opened in a purpose built building in August 2001 at a cost of £2.3 million, 600,000 of which was spent on redisplaying the collections. Since opening the museum has attracted approximately 130,000 visitors.

The main emphasis of the new museum is on the palaeontology of the Isle of Wight rather than its geology. The displays reflect the local geology and so fossils ranging from the Lower Cretaceous to the Quaternary only are on display. The museum is divided into two main galleries; the first is fossil rich and acts as a kind of time tunnel that takes visitors from the Quaternary back to the time of a Lower Cretaceous marine transgression that occurred shortly after the rocks of the Wessex Formation were deposited approximately 120 million years ago. Gallery 2 covers dinosaurs of the Wessex Formation of the Isle of Wight and in addition to many spectacular fossils, some type material, includes full sized fleshed out models of dinosaurs set in dioramas based on latest interpretations of the Wealden Environment. The need to include fleshed out dinosaurs one of which is animatronics based was seen as a response to raised audience expectations as a result of the BBC's 'Walking with Dinosaurs' and hence the title for this talk.

Martin pointed out some of the problems that have been encountered with the new displays; these include slight deterioration of some of the fleshed models and problems with access to light units in illuminated panels. These are problems that could be encountered by anyone involved in a similar project.

Bringing Earth Science exhibits at the Natural History Museum back to life-a mineralogist's perspective

Alan Hart from the Natural History Museum spoke about the mineralogical collections at the NHM their past and future. He noted how there has been a shift in focus over the last 30 years with respect to collections; the priority used to be the

collections, now it is the public, or put another way, there has been a move from scientific systematic displays to more public friendly displays. Responsibility for exhibition content has shifted from curatorial staff in the past to display management teams. When work on the Earth's Treasury display in the Earth Galleries part of the museum was in progress the designer tended to think that objects complemented their design concept, and continuously needed to be reminded by the curatorial team that the objects were in fact what drove the concept.

Historically much of the NHM's mineralogical collection has been stored under the display cases in the mineralogy display area of the Waterhouse building; this has luckily preserved exhibition space that may have been absorbed by other department's projects. At present this is a traditional systematic display. This needs to be reappraised, at present it is more or less a 'dictionary' of mineralogy, the plan is to convert this to more of an encyclopaedia. The systematic nature could be kept, but the display will be updated with the use of more modern design and lighting in the existing cases (as has been done with the invertebrate gallery). Computer databases could be used perhaps to give extra contextual information on objects for example the story behind them or ongoing scientific research.

Darwin's influence on Petrology displays at the NHM

Dave Smith spoke about the public perception of petrology displays (dull grey blocks of rock) and how museums have to adapt (Darwin bit) to public demand. He said that the public's perception of petrology and other geological subjects as being boring is partly due to dull museum displays and that such subjects are really only of academic interest. We now have to cope with a changed society where rows and rows of rock, dioramas etc. are no longer exotic things. Most people now have the opportunity for travel, access to TV and the internet.

He pointed out that museums have to adapt (introduce multimedia solutions, keep the visitor interested, make things relevant to the visitor) or die (survival of the fittest). The original geology galleries were mostly visited by need rather than interest. The Earth Galleries development was seen as an answer to survival of the display of earth sciences collections. This was concept driven and designed to be more visitor accessible. The Earth Lab is an updated and more user accessible version of the old British Regional Fossils display. The new incarnation has the Earth Lab data-site an on-line interactive that visitors can use to identify their fossils. The general petrology display was updated with simpler larger font text, with some text being replaced with explanative diagrams. These displays must continue to evolve in response to changing public demand. The Darwin Centre is the museum's latest response to changing public demands and has behind the scenes tours that can give access to historical expedition collections or where collections are too vulnerable roving cameras can relay information back to audiences. These changes can lead to a blurring between the traditional roles of curatorial and front of house staff when it comes to deciding who should give up their time to lead tours or give talks.

Redeveloping the Sedgwick Museum-the changing face of the Palaeozoic wing after nearly a century

Liz Hide and Leslie Noe described how the Sedgwick museum, opened to the public in 1904, had not changed much since; it is a fine example of an Edwardian-style museum. Its historical nature has in itself caused its own problems when seeking to update the Palaeozoic wing. The Palaeozoic wing is known as the 'Oak Wing' because of its beautiful oak display cases which are, of course, listed. Any changes therefore had to be carried out in agreement with the local listed building officer. £300,000 from the Designation Challenge fund was available plus some other extra money.

A visitor survey which was carried out with the purpose of establishing how the museum could be improved returned the answer that the public were happy with the museum the way it was! However, the fact that visitors also liked a recent attempt to update part of the display (Jurassic Sea) was at odds with this. In redeveloping the Palaeozoic gallery it had to be born in mind that the users of the museum ranged from visiting scientists to families, school groups, tourists and specialist adult groups. A junior board was formed to work with the display team and a model maker, and were given a case of their own to produce (about the world's largest spider). A small design company was chosen for the project as they didn't have a well-known house style that they would imprint upon the gallery.

It was decided to place interpretation labels next to the specimens rather than at the bottom of the cases. Text was aimed to be accessible to all levels of understanding. A conscious effort was made to redisplay large spectacular objects in the upright cases, smaller items in the glass top cases. The labels were designed to be eye-catching and draw people in to look at the specimens more closely but without being distracting. The mounting system for the specimens needed to be one that allowed removal of specimens for study or conservation. Cases were cleaned and French-polished before redisplay, gallery repainted and the once echoing floor changed from lino to a carpet covering. A local kite-maker made sculptures of Palaeozoic animals out of kite materials.

Areas with seating were created for reading and handling trolleys were built. The handling trolleys consist of a wheeled chest of lockable drawers that contained fossils from the reserve collection in Plastazote inserts, these also contained writing materials. The handling trolleys have proved very popular. Books mounted on wooden boards can be carried around the gallery to provide more background information. Extra contextual information about the contents of display cases and individual specimens were laminated and made into flip-books with wooden clamp spines, two copies of each book was produced. The redeveloped gallery seems to be popular, and more public evaluation will be carried out.

On the second day, a group of about 20 gathered for a detailed look at the new displays, before heading out to the Earth Science Department's purpose-built storage, preparation and conservation facility. Here, led by Mike Dorling, the vast scale of the collections became apparent. We also had an opportunity to see the

conservation laboratories, about to be brought back to life after a period of disuse.
Dan Pemberton, Dinosaur Isle

Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops

19-20 May 2003 Inverness, Cromarty and Elgin

GCG seminar and field trip: Scottish geology collections and collectors

The Moray Firth coast has long been famous for its fossils and its collectors, amongst whom, of course, is Hugh Miller. This area has some classic sites, some of which are still yielding important material which is housed not only in the local museums of Inverness and Elgin, but also in the national collections in Edinburgh and in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. This seminar will look at the history of collecting and collectors in this area, and at some of the current work in Scotland, as well as providing an opportunity to view the local collections and visit some of these nationally important sites.

Provisional programme

Monday 19 May

0900 Meet at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness.

1000 Arrive Cromarty, 'the jewel in the crown of Scottish vernacular architecture', for a visit to Hugh Miller's Cottage (National Trust for Scotland), the Hugh Miller Monument, the old Kirk with gravestones carved by Miller, and the classic fish locality on the Cromarty beach made famous in *The Old Red Sandstone* (1841).

1215 Lunch (at local pub)

1400 Arrive back at Inverness Museum

1415 Presentations, including Jon Watt (Inverness Museum) on Inverness Museum's geology collections and their collectors; and Mike Taylor (NMS) on Hugh Miller, fossil discoverer and collector.

1615 Tea

1630 - 1715 Tour of geology collections and gallery with Jon Watt.

Tuesday 20 May 2003

0900 Meet at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery

1000 Arrive Elgin Museum. Coffee

1015 Presentations, including talks from staff at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow on collecting the Scottish dinosaurs - from 1982 to the present day; Coal, ash and the will of the dead; and Scottish amateur collectors and the Hunterian geology collections.

1145 Tour of geology collections with Susan Bennett (Curator, Elgin Museum)

1230 Lunch (departure of members wishing to leave at this time)

1400 – 1700 Fieldtrip in the Elgin area, including Clashach Quarry with its well-known Permo-Triassic trackways, and the geology of the Moray Firth coast.

1800 Return to Inverness

Meeting fee to be confirmed.

Local contact: Jon Watt, (Curator Natural Sciences), Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness, IV2 3EB tel 01463 237114 fax 01463 225293 email jonathan.watt@highland.gov.uk

To register your interest and to receive the final programme, complete the booking form on the centre page, and return it to Steve McLean, Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT fax 0191 222 6753 email s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

11 June 2003 Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, New Walk, Leicester
GCG Workshop: Identifying Fossils 3. Marine Reptiles

Marine reptile bones were amongst the first recognised British fossils. The focus of this workshop, led by Mark Evans, will be mainly, although not exclusively, on plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs and marine crocodiles. These groups will be reviewed to place the British taxa in context, and we will look at various ideas on behaviour and lifestyle. We will then examine the British forms in more detail. This will include a guide to isolated bones and teeth which curators may get as enquiries or come across in their stores.

Programme
10:15 Coffee
10:45 Marine reptile taxonomy and biology and an overview of the British fauna
12:45 Lunch
13:45 Identifying marine reptiles
16:00 Finish

Places are limited so book quickly to avoid disappointment. Course fee: £10
For further information and to book a place on the course contact: Mark Evans, Curator (Geology), New Walk Museum, Leicester, LE1 7EA tel 0116 225 4904 fax 0116 225 4903 switchboard 0116 225 4900 e-mail evanm003@leicester.gov.uk **by 16 May 2003.**

9 September 2003 Department of Palaeontology, Natural History Museum, London.
GCG Workshop: The curation and conservation of micropalaeontological materials.

This one day session will start with an introductory lecture on the microfossil groups that are held at the NHM ie Foraminifera, Ostracoda, palynomorphs, Conodonta and Radiolaria. A series of case studies outlining the storage and documentation of each of the major fossil types will be illustrated by curators with a speciality in those particular aspects of the collections. There will also be a short presentation by the Palaeontology Conservation Unit on the conservation of micropalaeontological material.

Please register if you are interested in attending this session by contacting Giles Miller, Department of Palaeontology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell, Road, London, SW7 5BD tel 020 7942 5415 email G.Miller@nhm.ac.uk

22 - 23 September 2003 North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe.
GCG Seminar and Field Trip: Is Collecting Dead?
Following on from the Ethics conference, this seminar will investigate the ways that museums are acquiring geological specimens today. How is collecting actually undertaken in this country and how much is actually done? Are we active enough? Do curators have any time to collect and if not, is this limiting the development of collections...in effect are collections, particularly in local museums, stagnating? What is being offered for sale and are museums still receiving significant donations? Are there good communication channels between museums about material being offered on the market? What are our individual collecting policies and practices and are these co-ordinated and working on a local/regional/national basis? Can GCG help to develop better communication channels? A field trip will be provided for the second day of this session.

Local contact: Steve Thompson, North Lincolnshire Museum, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe, North Lincs, DN15 7BD tel 01724 843533 fax 01724 270474 e-mail Steve. Thompson@northlincs.gov.uk
To offer papers please contact Steve McLean, Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765 fax 0191 222 6753 e-mail s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

Oct/Nov 2003
GCG Study Visit
This year we are investigating the possibility of a study trip either to Denmark or to Switzerland in late October/early November. Further details will appear in the next edition of *Coprolite*, but in the meantime, keep an eye on GCG's website www.geocurator.org. To register initial interest please contact Steve McLean, Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765 fax 0191 222 6753 e-mail s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

9-10 December 2003 Ludlow Museum Resource Centre and Secret Hills Visitor Centre, Craven Arms
GCG Seminar and 30th AGM
Contact:: Daniel Lockett, Ludlow Museum, Castle Street, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AS tel 01584 873857 (813666 after April) fax 01584 546763 e-mail Daniel.Lockett@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Other meetings

16 April 2003 Harold Riley Suite, University of Salford
English Nature, Geological Society Geoconservation Commission and the Russell Society: Mineral collecting and conservation – hammering out a future?
Mineral collecting is scientifically and educationally important and a hobby enjoyed by many. However, many mineral sites are finite and the issue of sustainable collecting on mineral sites is becoming increasingly important. Collecting is fundamental to mineralogical research, and for educational, commercial and aesthetic purposes, but indiscriminate activity can deplete or destroy a

mineralogical site. This conference aims to discuss the different aspects of mineral collecting and the best way of conserving the available mineral resource for future use by all interest groups.

This meeting aims to open a debate rather than attempt to reach solutions and provides an opportunity to share views and identify and discuss issues. Speakers have been chosen to reflect a full range of views on the issues surrounding mineral collecting and include; the statutory conservation bodies; professional, hobbyist and academic research collectors; museums; landowners; and industrial archaeologists. The conference will conclude with an open debate and it is hoped that stimulating discussion will follow. The conference proceedings will be published by English Nature and will be available shortly after the conference. Delegates will also have a chance to express their own views on mineral collecting and conservation in the form of written statements, which will be included with the proceedings volume and collected on the day of the conference.

Registration is £25 and this fee includes car parking (the venue is also a short walk from Salford Crescent Station), tea/coffee, lunch, a conference pack and the conference proceedings. Please register by 31 March 2003 as numbers are limited and we cannot guarantee registration on the day of the conference. University accommodation is available on request. Please contact the accommodation office at the University of Salford tel 0161 7379364.

Contact: Jennifer Yau, Environmental Impacts Team, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough, UK PE11UA tel 01733 455504.

19-23 May 2003 Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis, Leiden, The Netherlands. VII International Symposium: Cultural Heritage in Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy: Libraries – Archives – Museums: *Museums and their collections*

Contact: Dr Cor F. Winkler Prins, Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA LEIDEN, The Netherlands tel +31 71 5687643, fax +31 71 5687666, email winkler@nnm.nl

14-18 July 2003 Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland INHIGEO International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences 28th Symposium: Geological travellers

The programme will comprise 4 days of talks and poster sessions on the theme of Geological travellers. The symposium language will be English. The optional post-symposium field trip will take place between Saturday 19th – Saturday 26th July 2003 and will involve an anticlockwise circumnavigation around Ireland during which some classic areas of Irish geology will be examined. A number of these sites hold particular significance in the history of geology. Sites to be visited may include the Giant's Causeway in north east Ireland; the Donegal granite upon which much of the debate of the granite controversy of the 1950s was debated, Cregg Castle the ancestral home of the celebrated mineralogist and chemist Richard Kirwan; the Burren in County Clare a site of exceptional beauty in karstic limestones; Cashel, Co. Tipperary - an important early Christian site; the River Blackwater valley where

J.B. Jukes examined the nature of Tertiary river drainage patterns; and Hook Head in the southeast corner of the country where Captain Thomas Austin described wonderful Lower Carboniferous crinoids. The trip will be led by Patrick Wyse Jackson and will be joined by Gordon Herries Davies for part of the trip.
Estimated costs are: Registration fee: c.€380, Accompanying members: €100. Accommodation: c. €58 per night. Field trip: €500 per person.

Further details are available on the Web site: www.tcd.ie/Geology/ or from the convenor, Dr Patrick N Wyse Jackson, Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland tel 353 1 6081477 fax 353 1 6711199 e-mail wysjcknp@tcd.ie.

10-14 August 2003 Calgary, Alberta, Canada
GeoSciEd IV
This meeting aims to support colleagues across the world who are involved in Earth science education from elementary to university/college levels and beyond, through a variety of presentations, workshops and field visits. There will be opportunities to share expertise and experiences, for personal development and for networking with other geoscience educators from around the world. Consult the web site www.geoscied.org for further details.
Contact: Chris King, Senior Science Education Lecturer: Earth science, Director of the Earth Science Education Unit, ' Haleside ', 65 Hale Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9HP, UK tel + 44 161 929 0063, email cjhking@btinternet.com

24-26 September 2003 Centre Alexandre Koyré, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Université Paris I-Sorbonne
Correspondence and the history of biology (18th-20th centuries)
Contact: Nicholas Robin & Josquin Debaz, Laboratoire de cryptagamie, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 12 rue Buffon, 75005 Paris, France email corresponances@voila.fr

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